LISTING OF SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Please replace paragraph [0045] with the following amended paragraph:

[0045] FIG. 3b illustrates another configuration of two collocated CNEs that are interconnected via a core node 10b. In this configuration, none of the bundles of intra-switch optical fiber strands is required to use the network frame format. Each of the CNEs 24 and 24' may, however, use a proprietary frame format, connection management interface 29, and CNE controller.

Please replace paragraph [0046] with the following amended paragraph:

[0046] FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram of a structure of a prior art synchronous transport signal (STS)-3 frame, in accordance with the synchronous optical network (SONET) protocol, and a synchronous transport mode (STM)-1 frame, in accordance with the synchronous digital hierarchy (SDH) protocol. The frame 30 has a 2,349 byte payload part 32, and a 81 byte frame overhead part 34. In addition, 27 bytes of the payload part 32 are used for path overhead, while the remaining 2,322 bytes are reserved for payload data. The frame overhead part 34 is partitioned into regenerator or section overhead (R/S OH) 36, and multiplex or line overhead 38. The R/S OH 36 occupies one third of the overhead part 34, and marks a beginning of the frame using a framing pattern 40. As is known in the art, 3 A1 bytes, followed by 3 A2 bytes are generally used for the framing pattern (A1=hex F6, and A2=hex 28). Immediately following the framing pattern is a byte called the J0 byte 42. Both the SONET and the SDH standard provide a communications channel using the J0 byte, called a section trace. The SONET standard defines a 16-byte-long section trace message that is generated from J0 bytes extracted from 16 consecutive frames. The SDH standard defines a 16-byte-long section trace message. A last third of the R/S OH 36 is a data communications channel (DCC) 44 defined by both standards.

Please replace paragraph [0055] with the following amended paragraph:

[0055] In step 140, an issued strand number, which indexes the strand through which a message 50 was sent, is extracted from the message 50. If all of the strands received messages, no strand integrity loss is detected. The node 10 that receives a message at an Rx port 20 correlates its assigned strand number with the received strand number (i.e. the strand through which the message was sent), in step 142. If the assigned strand number matches the

received strand number, for each of the strands connected to the Rx port 20, the strand order is verified. If the assigned and received strand numbers do not match, a strand bundle error is detected. A message reporting the results 144 of the strand-level test is sent to the management interface 29 (FIG. 3a).

Please replace paragraph [0062] with the following amended paragraph:

[0062] In step 160 messages 50 received at respective Rx ports 20 of the interconnected nodes are forwarded with identifiers of the respective Rx ports 20, to a processor. The processor may then test adherence to the equipping rules, generate a connectivity map, and/or perform contiguity testing (step 162). In step ~~163~~164, the processor reports the results of the verification and management procedures to the management interface 29.